

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

CONFERENCE CALL

May 11, 2005

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Robin Harkless

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Conference Call

May 13, 2005

Dworshak Update

Cindy Henriksen, COE, reported that Dworshak has been operating to pass inflow, currently 15 kcfs, and not to go below 12 kcfs. The COE plans to continue with this strategy, with outflows at 15 kcfs through the weekend and a further decision on Monday about whether to drop to 12 kcfs, given the most current water supply forecast. From a management perspective, outflows need to be managed to a weekly average, rather than daily, considering downstream projects/operations and the use of a water supply 'forecast'. It was clarified that the weekly average is determined by the Dworshak elevation target – 1592.3' by Wednesday, May 18. The salmon managers stressed the preference for not going below 12 kcfs outflows, even if it would require the project to be drafted slightly below 1592'. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, said that the COE's planned operation works to meet the salmon managers needs. NMFS, WDFW, USFWS and CRITFC also agreed with the operation.

ACTION: Dworshak will continue to pass inflow, 15 kcfs outflow, through the weekend. The action agencies will determine on Monday whether to continue with 15 kcfs or drop outflows to 12 kcfs, given the water supply forecast. Cindy will notify TMT on Monday via email what the Dworshak operation will be until Wednesday, May 18. Dworshak operations will be on the agenda for the 5/18 TMT meeting.

SOR 2005-13

The salmon managers submitted a request that, given the recent increase in migrating juveniles, the COE provide spill at Lower Monumental instead of collection and bypass of excess fish that cannot be barged.

The COE responded that the Fish Passage Plan does not currently have this contingency for Lower Monumental, and suggested that if this request will be applied in the future, it should be included in the plan. The salmon managers agreed. There will be further discussion with TMT about incorporating language into the Fish Passage Plan relative to the above request. Walla Walla experts reported that many fish passed Little Goose on

Wednesday and Thursday (5/11-12), which would likely put them at Lower Monumental tonight and tomorrow (5/13-14). Given this information, the COE proposed to operate Lower Monumental as follows:

Spill ~20 kcfs starting this evening, 5/13, for 24-hours through bays 3 and 7. A radio-tag study at Lower Monumental will require the project to spill through bays 7 and 8 from 10am-1pm tomorrow, 5/14, after which spill through 3 and 7 will continue to complete the 24-hour bulk spill operation. The COE noted that, if necessary, bypass will be implemented as well, citing 95% survival rates through this type of passage.

NMFS and others expressed appreciation to the COE for providing this operation. It was suggested that the cause for the increase in fish numbers is likely due to the low flow year causing slower migration, followed by the recent spurt of rain events that pushed the fish downstream quickly.

Next TMT Meeting, Wednesday, May 18, 9am-noon

Agenda Items include:

- Comments on 5/4, 5/11 Meeting Minutes
- Dworshak Operations Update
- Priest Rapids Operations Update
- Libby SOR from USFWS
- Operations Review

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Today's Technical Management Team conference call was chaired by Cindy Henriksen and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at this meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should contact Cindy Henriksen at 503/808-3945.

2. Dworshak Operations.

The purpose of today's call is to check in on the Dworshak operation, said Henriksen; since Wednesday, we have been releasing 15 Kcfs, essentially passing inflow. The reservoir has drafted slightly, which tells us that the inflow peak has indeed passed at Dworshak. We intend to hold 15 Kcfs through the weekend; rain is expected early next week, and we will see how that affects inflows. The intent is to continue to pass inflow through next Wednesday, maintaining a 12 Kcfs minimum outflow from Dworshak.

David Wills said that accords with the salmon managers' desires; however, he said they would prefer to see the action agencies pass daily average inflow through next Wednesday, with 12 Kcfs as a minimum even if inflows drop below 12 Kcfs. Henriksen replied that it is not logistically feasible to manage to a daily inflow forecast; the action agencies would prefer to hold the

Dworshak outflow at 15 Kcfs through the weekend, and revisit that operation on Monday. In short, our intent is to continue to implement the SOR by releasing 15 Kcfs through the weekend, Henriksen said; we will revisit this operation on Monday, May 16, and consider reducing Dworshak outflow to 12 Kcfs at that time.

Wills said the salmon managers would be comfortable maintaining the 15 Kcfs through next Wednesday, even if that means drafting Dworshak by a foot or so. If you trust us, I can guarantee we won't have to go below 12 Kcfs before next Wednesday, said Wellschlager. That sounds reasonable from Idaho's perspective, said Russ Kiefer. Again, I would prefer to continue to keep Dworshak outflow closer to 15 Kcfs through Wednesday, said Wills; apparently the action agencies don't want to go there. Paul Wagner said NMFS is fine with the action agencies' proposal; Cindy LeFleur said Washington is as well, but asked how the weekly average inflow will be calculated. The average inflow yesterday was 13.8 Kcfs, said Henriksen; there is the potential for rain in the Idaho panhandle early next week. I am using the Wednesday-Wednesday period to monitor Dworshak's reservoir elevation. If it is significantly below 1592.3 feet on Monday, we may choose to reduce outflow to 12 Kcfs at that time, she said. Again, our goal is to end Wednesday with an elevation near 1592.3 feet.

Wills said he is willing to accept this scenario; the salmon managers will continue to monitor the situation, and if they have concerns, they will contact the Corps on Monday. No objections were raised to this operation.

3. SOR 2005-13.

This SOR covers operations at Lower Monumental Dam, said Kiefer; he noted that, over the past week or so, it has been necessary to bypass juvenile migrants arriving at Lower Monumental because there was no room on the barge. We believe spillway passage is better for fish than bypass, he said; what this SOR requests is that, when we are unable to safely load the fish at Lower Monumental, we spill, rather than running them through the bypass. It is possible that we won't even need to implement this again this year, but we would request that, if the situation arises again in the future, that spill be provided to move the excess fish past the project in the safest in-river passage.

Henriksen noted that USFWS, Oregon, Idaho, Washington, CRITFC, the Nez Perce Tribe and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes signed on to this SOR. There are a couple of process-related issues, she said; first, this operation is not referenced in the Fish Passage Plan, and I would ask that in future years, if this operation is desired, that it be included in the FPP. That is a very good suggestion, said Kiefer. Second, said Henriksen, we had some discussions with our experts at Walla Walla about the number of fish moving downstream, the status of the migration and the status of the transport program. We found that there were a lot of fish passing Lower Granite on Thursday; those fish will be

arriving at Lower Monumental today and tomorrow. A barge will arrive at Lower Monumental tonight, and another barge will arrive tomorrow night. We are willing to spill using the bulk spill pattern at 20 Kcfs for 24 hours beginning tonight, to move this last slug of fish through, she said. We do see fish numbers starting to fall at Little Goose from here on out, she said. In response to a question, Henriksen said the radio-tag spillway survival test is ongoing at Lower Monumental's bays 7 and 8; spill for fish passage would occur through bays 3 and 7.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the potential impacts of the SOR operation on the spillway survival study at bays 7 and 8. Paul Wagner said that, given the fact that this is a 24-hour operation, NMFS does not see a big conflict here. Wills agreed. Are we getting more naturally-spawned smolts coming out, have hatchery releases increased, or is this just an artifact of the fact that this is a full-transport year? John Wellschlager asked. We don't see an increase in natural-spawning production, Kiefer replied; we think it is an artifact of the fact that this is a low-flow year, and when flows increase, we see a big slug of fish moving downstream.

With that, today's conference call was adjourned.

**TMT Conference Call Participants
May 13, 2005**

Name	Affiliation
Cindy Henriksen	COE
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
John Wellschlager	BPA
Nic Lane	BPA
Dan Spear	BPA
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
David Wills	USFWS
Rich Domingue	NMFS
Paul Wagner	NMFS

